

REMARKS:

This is intended as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated August 11, 2004, having a shortened statutory period for response set to expire on November 11, 2004. Please reconsider the claims pending in the application for reasons discussed below.

Claims 1-30 remain pending in the application upon entry of this response. Claims 1-3, 5-10, 12-19, 21-28 and 30 stand rejected. Claims 1, 8, 21, 24-25 and 28 have been amended. Claims 4, 11 and 20 stand objected, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claim 29 has been allowed by the Examiner. Reconsideration of the rejected claims is requested for reason presented below.

Claims 21-28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Benze, *et al.*, DE 3937720A, herein "*Benze*." The Examiner asserts that *Benze* discloses all features of the claimed invention. The Applicant respectively traverses the rejection.

Benze discloses a process for cleaning a microwave oven that includes placing a wetted cloth containing a surfactant solution in the microwave oven, operating the oven to heat the cloth, allowing the cloth to cool down and wiping the interior of the microwave oven with the cloth. In *Benze*, the cloth preferably comprises one or more layers of viscose (rayon). While *Benze* discloses a cloth and a surfactant solution, *Benze* remains completely silent to an enclosure. In fact, on page 3 of the office action for which this response is addressing, the Examiner states, "*Benze* discloses substantially all features of the claimed invention except ***an enclosure***." Therefore, *Benze* does not teach, show or suggest a method for cleaning an interior of a microwave oven, comprising placing a cleaning apparatus in the microwave oven, wherein the cleaning apparatus comprises a cleaning article and a surfactant solution at least partially surrounded by ***an enclosure***, heating the cleaning apparatus for a time period, evaporating at least a portion of the surfactant solution to form a vapor, emitting the vapor from the cleaning apparatus, condensing the vapor on the interior, hydrating a residue adhered to the interior, and removing the residue with the cleaning article, as cited in claim 21 and claims 22-24 dependant thereon.

Also, *Benze* does not teach, show or suggest a method for cleaning a microwave oven interior comprising placing a cleaning apparatus in a microwave oven, wherein the cleaning apparatus comprises a cleaning article, a surfactant solution and ***an enclosure*** at least partially enclosing the surfactant solution, heating the cleaning apparatus to form a vapor from at least a portion of the surfactant solution, delivering the vapor from the cleaning apparatus to the microwave oven interior, loosening a residue adhered to the microwave oven interior, and removing the residue with the cleaning article, as cited in claim 25 and claims 26-28 dependant thereon.

The Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection.

Claims 1-3, 5-6, 8-10, 12-13, 15-19 and 30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Benze* in view of *Spector*, U.S. Patent No. 5,007,529, herein "*Spector*." The Examiner asserts it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to utilize, in *Benze*, an enclosure as taught by *Spector* in order to contain a microwave-safe material for effecting a cleaning process. The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Benze has been distinguished above. *Spector* discloses a microwavable air-freshener package that is warmed in a microwave oven, removed from the oven, placed in a room, and allowed to emit scented vapor throughout the room. *Spector* is completely silent to a cleaning process or cloth. *Spector* teaches against aqueous surfactant solutions, as necessary by *Benze*. In *Spector*, the "package contains no water or other fluid that can spill out of the package" (column 3, lines 65-66) and "the ingredients are combined with a highly volatile alcohol carrier" (column 3, lines 19-20). In *Benze*, a cloth wetted with an aqueous surfactant solution is simply placed in the oven. *Benze* is completely silent to any type of container. The device of *Spector* releases a volatile organic vapor and avoids emitting or forming an aqueous residue, while an aqueous residue is mandatory for the invention of *Benze* to succeed. Therefore, there is no suggestion or motivation in neither *Benze* nor *Spector*, either alone or in combination, to describe the present claimed invention.

Furthermore, *Spector* discloses that the container is formed of a cylindrical can (10) and a cover (11) such that the "container is molded or otherwise ***formed from a closed-cell*** foamed polyurethane, styrofoam or other rigid foam plastic material"

(column 2, lines 40-45). *Spector* remains completely silent to opening the container during microwave use. In fact, *Spector* teaches away from *Benze*, since the “vapor is discharged into the atmosphere through the vent when the package is removed from the oven and placed in a room” (Abstract). Therefore, the Applicant fails to see how one skilled in the art would be motivated to combine *Benze*, a process to clean a microwave oven, and *Spector*, an air-freshener.

Benze and *Spector*, alone or in combination, do not teach, show or suggest an apparatus for cleaning an interior of a microwave oven comprising an enclosure disposed at least partially around at least one microwave-safe material for effecting a cleaning process, an outlet disposed on the enclosure, and a cleaning solution comprising a surfactant and compatible with food preparation, wherein the cleaning solution is in fluid communication through the outlet to the interior of the microwave oven, as recited in claim 1 and claims 2-3 and 5-6 dependant thereon.

Also, *Benze* and *Spector*, alone or in combination, do not teach, show or suggest an apparatus for cleaning an interior of a microwave oven comprising an enclosure disposed at least partially around a surfactant solution compatible with food preparation, an outlet on the enclosure, wherein the surfactant solution is in fluid communication through the outlet to the interior of the microwave oven, and a cleaning material for effecting a cleaning process, as recited in claim 8 and claims 9-10 and 12-13 dependant thereon.

Also, *Benze* and *Spector*, alone or in combination, do not teach, show or suggest a method for cleaning an interior of a microwave oven using a cleaning apparatus comprising a cleaning material and an enclosure containing an outlet and a surfactant solution, comprising heating the cleaning apparatus with microwave energy for a period to evaporate a portion of the surfactant solution to form a vapor, emitting the vapor from the enclosure through the outlet, condensing at least a portion of the vapor onto the interior, maintaining the microwave oven for a second period to hydrate a residue adhered to the interior, and removing the residue from the interior with the cleaning material, as recited in claim 15 and claims 16-19 dependant thereon.


Further, *Benze* and *Spector*, alone or in combination, do not teach, show or suggest an apparatus for cleaning an interior of a microwave oven comprising an

enclosure and a seal disposed at least partially around a surfactant solution compatible with food preparation, an outlet on the enclosure wherein the surfactant solution is in fluid communication to the interior of the microwave oven upon opening at least a portion of the seal, and a cleaning material for effecting a cleaning process, as recited in claim 30.

The Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection.

In conclusion, the references cited by the Examiner, alone or in combination, do not teach, show or suggest claimed aspects of the invention. Having addressed all issues set out in the office action, the Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully request that the claims be allowed.

Respectfully submitted,



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